

.nz NEWSLETTER – November 2006

:: DNC OFFICE ::

In October the number of active .nz domain names increased from 248,416 to 252,928, a net increase of 4,512.

Change to Registering, Managing and Cancelling Domain Names Policy

Separate to the current review of the Registering, Managing and Cancelling Domain Names Policy, detailed below, a change has been made to the existing policy.

A clause has been added to section 4, the structure of a domain name, and reads as follows:

4.2.5 Domain names commencing “xn--” are not permitted.

The background to this change is explained in detail in a supporting paper. This paper can be read in full at <http://dnc.org.nz/content/idn-issues1-0.pdf>. In summary, the need for change has come about because of the latest implementation of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) in Applications (i.e. Web Browsers). IDNs are domain/host names that are represented by native language, non-ASCII characters. For example the macrons in the Māori language.

In the case of IDNs, when a web browser sees a non-ASCII character host/domain name in its location bar, or a URL with a non-ASCII domain part embedded in a web page, the application is required to convert the non-ASCII characters into a special encoded format (Punycode) using only the standard ASCII subset characters. This process converts the name into an ASCII string with the prefix “xn--“ that can be looked up at the .nz nameserver to determine the location of the Web site.

Browsers that support this functionality include Internet Explorer 7, Netscape 7.1, Mozilla / Firefox, 1.4, and Opera 7.

A proposal to establish a working group to look at IDNs in the .nz space will be put to the NZOC December meeting. More on this will be in the December newsletter.

Any comments or concerns arising from this change should be addressed to policies@dnc.org.nz

Second consultation on RMC Policy Review

InternetNZ, through the Office of the Domain Name Commissioner, is currently reviewing the Registering, Managing and Cancelling Domain Names policy. An initial call for comments on the policy review resulted in four submissions being received. These can be seen at <http://dnc.org.nz/rmc-review>.

As a result of some of the comments received, a further call for comments is being made, with a particular focus on obtaining people’s views on whether there should be any change to the current registration requirements.

Suggestions put forward in the submissions received as a result of the first consultation round include:

- That the five day grace period is also used as a public notification period. This procedure will address, for example, concerns raised on malicious registrations for phishing or other illegal or malicious purposes. Regulatory authorities can thus monitor proposed registrations and respond appropriately. For example, the use of the word “bank” is restricted under the Reserve Bank Act and inappropriate use may constitute an offence.
- The objective of the RMC policy should be to put in place processes to prevent fraudulent applications for domain names and also provide for cooperation with industry participants including state bodies where potential fraudulent applications are suspected. A further objective of the policy should be to ensure that the domain names have integrity. For example, registration of domain names that are likely to mislead Internet users such as derivatives of corporate names, for example “Wespac” and “Natonal” should be prevented.
- Introducing a requirement that the DNC is required to check applications for domain names against defined criteria, for example similar to those used by the Companies Office.
- Enabling the immediate and effective cancellation of a domain name in the event of a fraud.
- Insert a clause that states that a domain name must not consist of a word that is not permitted by law or the applicant itself is not permitted to use in accordance with any law operating in New Zealand. For example, Section 64 of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1989 Act which places limits on the use of restricted words such as “bank”, “banker” and “banking” in a name or title. If an application seeks to use such restricted words then the relevant registrar will be required to carry out checks that the applicant is permitted to use these words in their domain name.
- That a list of restricted words should be drawn up by the DNC as a guide for registrars carrying out their functions.
- Payment should be received from an applicant before the domain name is provided unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. Exceptional circumstances might include where the applicant can demonstrate that due to a pressing commercial requirement that use of the domain name is required immediately.

These suggestions represent significant changes to the current policies on .nz domain name registrations.

Currently, there are no restrictions on who can register in the “open” second level domains, for example .co.nz. Neither is there any restriction on what they can register. If a name is available then it can be registered on a “first come, first served” basis.

No specific checks are done when a name is registered, though names can subsequently be cancelled if found to be operating against the .nz policies and procedures. For example, names can be cancelled if used for illegal purposes but proof must be given to the DNC that use is illegal, the DNC will not make that judgement

The proposals listed above, if implemented, would result in a move away from the current situation to a much more “hands on” approach by the DNC and by registrars and the introduction of judgement calls as to what is or isn’t suitable in the .nz domain name space, possibly increasing the risk of litigation. Neither registrars, nor the DNC, currently get involved in matters concerning who the registrant of a domain name is, or what the domain name is being used for. (Note: There is a Dispute Resolution Service (DRS – <http://dnc.org.nz/drs>)

administered by the DNC that parties can use to resolve disputes over who the registrant of a domain name should be.)

If steps are taken to introduce registration restrictions, and also provide the ability to cancel a domain name to prevent it being used for fraudulent purposes, then that raises questions as to what other situations the DNC and/or registrars should get involved with. For example, in addition to financial scams, would there also be an expectation to define rules that covered pornography, intellectual property infringements, defamation etc.

We welcome comment on the policy issues raised. It would be very helpful if submissions which are supportive of some or all of the suggested changes were also to cover how any of these changes could be managed at an operational level, particularly ways to reduce the impact on registrars.

Submissions can be sent by email to policies@dnc.org.nz, by fax to (04) 495 2115, or by mail to P O Box 11881, Wellington. As submissions are received they will be published on the DNC website at <http://dnc.org.nz/rmc-2ndconsult>. Submissions should be received by midday on **Wednesday 17 January 2007**.

Dispute Resolution Service Decisions

To date there have been five published decisions. The decisions can be viewed at www.dnc.org.nz/drs-decisions

Statistics

Figures as at 31 October 2006:

	<i>Active names as at 1 October</i>	<i>Active names as at end 31 October</i>	<i>New registrations October</i>	<i>Renewals October</i>	<i>Net Growth</i>
.ac	1237	1238	15	266	1
.co	212099	216115	6276	48868	4016
.cri	18	18	0	3	-
.geek	826	831	17	200	5
.gen	1044	1054	17	304	10
.govt	865	868	3	709	3
.iwi	56	56	0	15	-
.maori	452	453	8	90	1
.mil	21	21	0	9	-
.net	14694	14969	475	3108	275
.org	14537	14741	365	3093	204
.parliament	2	3	1	2	1
.school	2565	2561	14	1133	-4
TOTAL	248416	252928	7191	57800	4512

Note: these figures do not include names in the 'pending release' status. They incorporate all active domain names in the .nz register. For more statistics, see <http://dnc.org.nz/statistics>

:: .nz REGISTRY SERVICES ::

Release of SRS Source Code

There will be a release of the SRS Open Source Code on Friday 8th December 2006. The SRS Open Source Code is available on Sourceforge. The Project is called "Domain Name Registry System" .

The link to access the project is <http://sourceforge.net/projects/dnrs/>

SRS Availability

SRS Availability	SLA	August	September	October
%	99.90	99.99	99.99	99.97

SRS Response Times

Response time performance figures on the production environment for the previous three months were:

Avg Response time (in seconds)	SLA Target (From 1 May 2006)	August`	September	October
Domain Details Query	≤1.5	0.05	0.05	0.03
Domain Update	≤0.8	0.43	0.46	0.45
Domain Create	≤0.8	0.45	0.53	0.48
GetMessage performance	≤0.8	0.05	0.04	0.03
Whois	≤0.8	0.17	0.16	0.12
Whois queries at back end including Registrar (volume 000's)	N/A	1,969	1599	1691
Whois Server Queries (volume 000's)	N/A	249	211	217
UDAI Valid Query	≤0.8	0.20	0.20	0.15

DNS Availability

DNS Availability	SLA	August	September	October
%	100	100	100	100

Whois Availability

Whois Availability	SLA	August	September	October
%	99.90%	99.99	99.99	99.97

Unscheduled Outages

Outage Type	Total Duration
SRS Unscheduled	854 seconds (14 minutes and 14 seconds)
WHOIS Unscheduled	710 seconds (11 minutes and 50 seconds)

Scheduled Outages and Updates

SRS Scheduled - 7.5 hrs	Scheduled hardware upgrade window
	Switch Front Ends
	Scheduled hardware upgrade window

DNS Scheduled 3 hrs	NS2, Primary 2 and NS3 in Scheduled downtime for upgrade
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Any Comments?

If you have any questions or concerns about the SRS, please don't hesitate to contact us. For registry or technical matters, contact Nick Griffin at support@nzrs.net.nz. For all other matters, contact Debbie Monahan at info@dnc.org.nz.

Please Note

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